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FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9162
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2011
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0101
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 0111
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 0584
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0400
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 0108
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 0267
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0508
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2406
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1791
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000270

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: CONCERN "THE GENERALS" COULD SPARK CONFLICT IN
APRIL

REF: A. BISHKEK 258

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 228

[1](#)C. 06 BISHKEK 1767

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Classified By: Amb. Marie L. Yovanovitch, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Ambassador met March 12 with "Adilet" Legal Clinic director and "Za Reformi" member Cholpon Jakupova to discuss the United Front and Felix Kulov's campaign to oust President Bakiyev. Jakupova has not joined the United Front herself, but said she agreed with many of its grievances against the government. She said the leadership of the movement -- "generals" such as Kulov, former (Acting) Interior Minister Omurbek Suvanaliyev, and parliamentarian Kubatbek Baibolov -- had the right political tools and financial support to succeed, and that she was concerned that their "Power Ministry" background brought a new and destabilizing factor into Kyrgyz politics that could lead to violence during the April demonstrations. Jakupova said that Kulov currently sees Russia as Kyrgyzstan's closest ally but welcomes increased activity by the U.S. and EU. End Summary.

NOVEMBER WAS JUST CHILD'S PLAY

[1](#)2. (C) During a March 12 meeting with Ambassador, Adilet Legal Clinic director Cholpon Jakupova warned of possible political turmoil if the newly formed United Front (Ref B) and its leader, former Prime Minister Felix Kulov, launch their campaign to oust President Bakiyev. Jakupova had recently met with Kulov, and she confirmed that the United Front plans nationwide demonstrations, starting on April 11,

unless Bakiyev institutes previously pledged reforms to "strengthen democratic institutions and fight corruption" and agrees to hold early presidential elections. Jakupova said the United Front office in Bishkek has an organized workforce with significant financial backing -- evidence that United Front is capable of making the November 2006 demonstrations look like "child's play."

THE "GENERALS"

¶3. (C) According to Jakupova, the "generals" of the United Front had the leadership skills, intellect, and support of the people needed to overthrow Bakiyev. (Note: The United Front's "generals" -- Kulov, Suvanaliyev, and Baibolov -- held that rank in the power ministries. End Note.) She said that MP Kubatbek Baibolov, a surprise signatory to the United Front's declaration, had vowed to use his political clout to support United Front, believing that this was their "last chance" to save Kyrgyzstan. She said Baibolov was sickened by the endless lies coming from the Kyrgyz White House and the lack of progress in reforming the government (see Ref A).

Jakupova said that Omurbek Suvanaliyev, the recently dismissed (Acting) Minister of Interior, was another crucial general, whose power stemmed from the strong support and respect of interior ministry officers. Jakupova expressed concern that the April demonstrations could end in violence.

¶4. (C) Jakupova said that Felix Kulov was the key to the movement and the greatest threat to Bakiyev. Jakupova said that, as Prime Minister for nearly two years, Kulov had been privy to damning information about Bakiyev and his cabinet, uncovering many of their weaknesses. She said that Kulov still has vast support among the population, is a natural organizer, and, after meeting with Russian Vice PM Sergei Ivanov (Ref B) in Moscow, appears to have the political, if

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not financial, backing of the Russian government. However, Jakupova felt that "diskettegate", a scandal linked to Kulov that involved opposition leaders who were caught on tape allegedly planning the seizure of government buildings during the November demonstrations (Ref C), could be a chink in Kulov's armor that Bakiyev may exploit. She also noted Kulov's perfect timing, claiming that the Kyrgyz people are tired of the Bakiyev government and believe that stability will never be reached under his regime. She said that Bakiyev's countless mistakes have split Kyrgyzstan into two countries, adding that the northerners are clearly against Bakiyev and the ethnic minorities fear his nationalistic tendencies. She argued that the average, law-abiding citizen who pays taxes is the last to be recognized, while criminals and corrupt businessmen earn respect from the government.

KULOV'S GOAL: REMOVE BAKIYEV

¶5. (C) During a recent meeting at United Front's headquarters, Jakupova said she cautioned Kulov that there were no legal or constitutional grounds to force early presidential elections. According to Jakupova, Kulov dismissed her concerns and vowed to remove Bakiyev from office, although he has said publicly that United Front would act within the constitutional framework. Jakupova asked about his foreign policy, to which Kulov quipped that currently "Russia is our only friend." Jakupova, a relentless advocate for human rights, referred Kulov to Russia's poor human rights record, but he assured her that he was committed to the protection of human rights. Jakupova told Ambassador that the Russian Federation was much more active in Kyrgyzstan than the U.S. or the European Union, but that Kulov preferred a balance between all parties. Ambassador said that Kyrgyzstan must also be proactive in taking control of its future instead of passively waiting for proposals from others.

JAKUPOVA NOT READY TO JOIN FRONT

16. (C) Jakupova said she agreed with the majority of United Front's grievances against Bakiyev, but she has yet to sign its declaration. Jakupova said she does not trust Kulov. She also feared joining United Front would invite further harassment by the prosecutor general, currently investigating a criminal case against her. She worried the prosecutors would force her to abstain from providing legal advice to the movement through intimidation and threats. She said that the authorities had demanded information about Adilet donors and partners and opened an investigation after she signed the For Reforms declaration last November.

WHAT ABOUT "FOR REFORMS"?

17. (C) Ambassador asked about the possibility of Almaz Atambayev, co-Chair of "For Reforms," joining forces with Kulov and the United Front. Jakupova said that Bakiyev had tried to use Atambayev against the United Front. She claimed that during one of several meetings between the president and Atambayev, Bakiyev offered him the position of Prime Minister, with current Prime Minister Azim Isabekov sitting right next to him. Jakupova said that Atambayev prefers Bakiyev over Kulov, speculating that Atambayev is still bitter from Kulov's refusal to join the opposition during the November demonstrations. She thought that Atambayev would

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join the planned demonstrations, but he would not join the United Front -- at least not yet. Jakupova stated that Atambayev may be under pressure from his own supporters who do not understand why Atambayev is now supporting Bakiyev. Local media reported that "For Reforms" also demanded the resignation of Bakiyev, but gave the president a chance to redeem himself before scheduled demonstrations in April.

COMMENT

18. (C) Jakupova is a well-respected human rights activist and in close touch with many of the key players in the opposition. She is an informed interlocutor and usually a calm, though not impartial, observer of the political scene. It struck us as out of character for her to be quite so worked up that the planned demonstrations may spiral out of control so well in advance. She is not the only one to express the concern that "The Generals" are adding a new and destabilizing factor to Kyrgyz politics that could lead to violence during the April demonstrations, but it is too soon to tell whether her fears are well grounded.

YOVANOVITCH